



Unaccompanied Minors in Finland
Riikka Asa FI NCP

Unaccompanied minors in Finland –study conclusions



- ✦ Unaccompanied minors generally arrive in Finland with the intention of seeking asylum on the basis of the overall security situation in the home country, membership of a religious minority and resulting fear of persecution, the association of a family member with political or other activity as well as the threat of honour-related violence. Asylum is typically applied for at an inland police department.
- ✦ Separate guidelines and form for interviewing minors
- ✦ No provisions yet on age determination



Unaccompanied minors in Finland –study conclusions



- ✦ In 2008 a total of 228 decisions were issued for unaccompanied minors seeking asylum, of which 157 were positive. As regards the positive decisions, three were for asylum whereas 130 applicants were granted a residence permit on the basis of the need for protection (security situation in the country of origin). A residence permit on individual compassionate grounds was granted to 23 applicants.
- ✦ It has been suggested that Section 87 of the Aliens Act should be amended to include so-called child-specific grounds for persecution.
- ✦ Successful project on integration launched in 2005





Nutukka –project: partners

- ✦ Viittakivi International Centre
- ✦ Turku Christian Institute
- ✦ Finnish Red Cross Turku Reception Centre
- ✦ Church Training College in Järvenpää
- ✦ The Federation of Special Welfare Organisations
- ✦ Reception Centres for Asylum Seekers in Oravainen and Perniö
- ✦ Ministry of Labour

- ✦ Partly funded by the European Refugee Fund





The Aim and Challenges

- ✦ To support young asylum seekers and refugees who have arrived in Finland unaccompanied and need special support to become independent
- ✦ To develop working methods and networking
- ✦ In 2009 approximately one hundred 16- to 17-year-old-asylum seekers attended the programme
- ✦ Prolonged processing times in the asylum process (6-12 months)
- ✦ Varying history of education





Models and curriculum

A) Daily model:

Classes in the Folk High School –counselling organised in the Reception Centre

B) Boarding school model:

Classes and free time activities. Counselling organised by special workers.

- ✦ Finnish language (150-170 lessons)
- ✦ Communication skills (25 lessons)
- ✦ Knowledge of Finnish Culture and Society (65-75 lessons)
- ✦ Skills of every day life (75-140 lessons)
- ✦ Basic computer skills (24-30 lessons)
- ✦ Programmed leisure activities (70 lessons)





Results

- ✦ Clear need for a special orientation programme for young asylum seekers and young immigrants
- ✦ The youngsters in the piloting programmes have managed to continue their studies either in the preparing courses for the vocational education or straight on the second level (secondary school or vocational school)
- ✦ Close cooperation between the Folk High School and Reception Centre is a fruitful model of organising education programmes
- ✦ Natural social networks vital for young immigrants –programmes should enhance interaction with the Finnish youth

